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## THE MARCH "LOTOS" EXHIBITION.

TO visit the Landscape Painters, and then go uptown to look at the Lotos Club Exhibition of twenty-four American paintings, was to put a fitting final chord to a song of the woodland. There the promise well-nigh fulfilled, here the acme of artistic attainment, the onleaping strains of which were present in the larger exhibition.

The advantage of small exhibitions carefully selected, over a large number of promiscuously hung canvases, was here again in evidence. Every one of these works had an individual claim, yet all supported each other to a united whole. To signalize any one painting over the others would be hardly possible. Still it may be said that the three Homer Martins, hung together with a keen sense of the fitness of things, impressed me most. It was like a three-stanzaed song, with tenderness, yet incomparable strength, the "Old Normandy Church" giving in its liquid robustness the motive; the mighty "Adirondack Scenery" forcing with imposing grandeur the climax; "Newport Neck," in subdued tone, the finale of an exquisite echo from Nature's temple.

The three Inness pictures had their own merits. "The Wood Gatherers" had deservedly the place of honor, if such a place there was where all were peers. The little known "Tragedy of the Sea," however, was strikingly and masterly composed.

There was a Blakelock "Moonlight," with an exquisitely vibrating light effect. The Julian Rix was not, on the contrary, altogether satisfactory; the landscape was true and sincere, but the sky flecked, mottled, confused, detracting from the good qualities of the rest of the painting. The four Wyatts were of the best work we have of this lamented master, the little "Early Twilight" being succulent and free, the "Keene Valley" splendid in tone. Of the men represented with one picture each, I would only mention the splendid "Landscape" of J. Francis Murphy.

## THE FIFTY-SEVENTH STREET EXHIBITION.

THE vista, on entering the Fine Arts Building, to the Dagnan-Bouveret painting is superb. On passing into the first hall one sees, in the far distance, through the two door-openings, the "Christ and the Disciples at Emmaus." The steps which lead from room to room are covered with a green carpet, in fortunate color-harmony with the tone-key of the painting, and may serve, as it were, as steps to a throne on which this striking scene is enacted. One should linger at this first entrance to receive an impression of this masterly painting not to be had in any other way. On closer inspection, when the Vanderbilt Gallery is entered, further beauties will be discovered. It was a daring, almost incongruous, yet overpowering thought to introduce the civilization of posterity, in the family of the artist, in adoration before the Presence, when that civilization had its birth.

A glance at the walls will at once convince how altered the surroundings from the early exhibitions. The tone is different. The high key and crying mannerisms of the past have changed to more solid work. The general character of the Exhibition is hardly different from the Academy shows. At once we notice the excellent manner in which the Hanging Committee has performed its work. It can hardly be improved upon, with one or two exceptions; for instance, when No. 5 *did* pass the jury—cause unknown—it was not quite necessary to hang it on the line. It might also have been better to have Nos. 258 and 262, the two Herters, farther apart. The same light effect in both paintings detracts the one from the other.

As to the artistic value of the paintings, it is what *Mr. Venus* might have called "very various." There is poor work there, even bad work. But the worst pictures are by men that have done better. Some show it even here. This being the case, will it do any good to pillory a poor painting, because it is an abortion? The excellent judgment of the jury did not admit a single picture that is irredeemable. A furtive criticism, here and there, is all that is required, while we pass on to what is worthy of praise.

There are some sixty portraits, many of them very attractive. Cecilia Beaux's No. 306 is good, with strong, free brush, while her portrait No. 339 is poor and poster-like. Thayer's No. 329 is unfinished, with a poorly-modelled left arm, while Maurice Fromkes gives Mr. John Noble Stearns in an expressive manner. Jessie A. Walker's little pastel is rather good. The portrait of Mrs. E. N., by William H. Hyde, is excellent, the mourning costume being happily relieved against sofa and background; it is better than No. 198. Sergeant Kendall's portrait of Mrs. William Gammell is a clever piece of painting, as is Lee Lufkins' portrait of a young girl. Adelaide Chase's work is better in No. 268 than in 273, although both pictures are fair. Joseph H. Boston gives a virile man's head. Bishop Cox's portrait is very poor. One of the best portraits is No. 259, by

Carroll Beckwith, while No. 148, a sketch by Miss Champney, is very promising. Kenneth Frazier's "The Orchid" is perhaps a portrait, but far from convincing, for instead of being satisfied with the orchid in the hair, he has made an orchid of the whole canvas, with confusing colors. Of children's portraits I like to notice Sarah W. Whitman's "Rosamond," which is true to child nature; the gilt lettering at the top, however, mars somewhat the effect. John W. Alexander sends the child sitting in front of her doll, which was seen in Philadelphia; to me the dress is somewhat stiff, and the child's face too much a reflection, as to color, of the doll's face before her.

There is an equal variety in the landscapes and figure-pieces. Some tease the eye with eccentric cadences, making us yearn for what is not there; others, in delightful harmony, tell their tale in warm and expressive method. Some show, unblushingly, color vulgarities that offend; then, again, we find an idea grasped with spacious and majestic power. Here a complicated composition, there an infinitely fine production of the art of self-restraint.

The prize-winners, Douglas Volk and W. L. Lathrop wear their laurels justly. The "Woodland Maid" touches the height of true poetry with perfect technical execution. The "Clouds and Hills" of Lathrop is simply composed, but grand in its suggestion of immensity.

One man's work more than any other has attracted me in this exhibition. A good many years ago I saw once hanging in a poor light, skied, a "Sheepfold by Night," which was very unsatisfactory to me. Now, there is no man who is not more or less subject to first impressions, and somehow that poor skied picture has always come in my mind when I felt inclined to admire Ben Foster's work. The four canvases which this artist shows here are, however, convincing as to his place in the very foremost ranks of our landscapists. The subtlety and poetic mystery which hover over his night scenes are charming to a degree. The work of C. H. Fromuth is very much like that of Charles Cottet, the similarity disturbing the enjoyment of its good qualities. No. 238, by Roger Donohue, looks like the geyser's spouting in the Yellowstone Park, instead of a surf over the bar. W. R. Derrich has a very good landscape. "The Gray Day," by Wm. M. Chase, is excellent, while the "Autumn Meadows," by Van Laer, has splendid qualities. The meaning of No. 349, "Afternoon Sky," by Charles Hopkinson, is, however, just out of my reach. E. S. Hamilton has some good color in "The Enchanted Wood." Needham's work, in No. 184, is striking and suggestive, but the pigment is far too pronounced in No. 196 and No. 199. The Carnegie medal picture by Tryon is one of the best landscapes here.

The figure work, of which there is a fair proportion, is equally interesting. The "Roses and Lilies" by Mary F. MacMonnies, perhaps slightly too colorful, is conceived with great breadth and freedom, and is an excellent work. The panel for the Appellate Court, "The Common Law," by Kenyon Cox, is hard, and dry, and loud, under the strong light of the Vanderbilt Gallery; but Mr. Cox always knows what he is doing, and what is glaring here, is the very thing for an ill-lighted court-room or corridor. The finely modulated lines will then soften in the subdued light, the colors will tone down, and still they will brighten the wall which they will adorn. Not judging therefore, where it hangs now, but where it will be, this panel is highly successful. Curran's work is pleasing as ever. Albert Herter's work is masterly, with defects, in "The Eve of St. Agnes." The shadows on the face are too deep and annoying, even if the high light is held responsible for this; the face also has a pained, hence inartistic expression, while the fingers are positively bad. In "At Twilight" the defect is found in the posing. A newsboy on the sidewalk saw the picture when it was carried out to the van, and cried out: "Gee, Jim, he's chawing her ear." Still, in spite of deficiency, these two pictures are the work of a man who will attain a commanding position.

The work of H. B. Snell, A. A. Wigand, C. Morris Young, George Elmer Browne, G. H. Bogert, G. DeForest Brush, the splendid Indian camp scene of E. Irving Couse, and some others, give ample food for study and admiration. In the Central Gallery some exquisite miniatures and virile bronzes are shown. Thus the twenty-first annual exhibition of the Society of American Artists will, during the month of April, be an attractive lounging place for the lover and student of art.

## "THE TEN PAINTERS."

A CULT should be seen by itself. It is to the advantage of the luminarists that their paintings are hanging in the Durand-Ruel Galleries in surroundings which might not be of benefit to another class of pictures. The Japanese matting and special wall covering harmonize with the general tone of these examples, which of themselves sustain each other. An air of tender freshness is inhaled when stepping into that room; there is no garishness in the high key of some of these canvases, nor is the refuge felt which

sometimes comes when the ultra of the impressionist school is met with.

With the exception of Hassam's work it may be conceded that the artists here show themselves in the individual manner by which they are known, and do this by their best work. None of Hassam's pictures is as good as the one in the Academy; the "Roman Scene" has a dexterous handling of color which is somewhat forced; the "Morning Mist" is airy, but his four examples show the great failing of most of this artist's brush productions—there is too much hurry. Weir's "New England Plowman" is a strong conception of excellent color, while the picture called "A Flower" is a sustained effort of delicate treatment. The portrait of President Thomas S. Hill, of Harvard, by Edward Simmons, is by no means out of place in this array of opalescent colorings and bright notes, imparting dignity to the ensemble. It has some of the best qualities which make a portrait true. Robert Reid's work shows the best there is in the school he has elected to follow. His favorite colors of purple and blue, of course, form the keynote of all his pictures. The "Fleur-de-Lis" is, however, such a one as will always be regarded a striking canvas of supreme interest. It is to be regretted that E. C. Tarbell sent only one example, and that a sketch. The stretch of foreground leading up to the female figure near the top of the canvas is a rather unusual yet telling composition, while the light play is decidedly clever. W. W. Dewing also sends but one canvas, a small portrait of a woman holding an iridescent bowl in her hand. It is charming and quiet in color, detached from the background, and on the whole an exquisite bit of painting. The "Boy and Girl" playing in a sunlit wood, by Frank W. Benson, ought to show as good drawing as posing, which it does not. The atmosphere and light effect make one, however, forget the defect. Of Twachtman I would only notice the one entitled "Morning" as being up to his standard, while the "Temple Medal" nude of Joseph R. Decamp is by far the best we have ever seen from him.

Thus does this second display of the Ten Secessionists prove the ability of these men without sustaining the reason of their departure from the Society.

#### THE NATIONAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION.

"DID you ever see an 'Academy' with so many portraits?" I overheard a group of the faithful ask; and certainly the portraits are many and excellent. Figures are not so good, and the Art that is clearly the American's own love—landscape—is more than good.

If "All's well that ends well" were true of a long line of Academy Exhibitions, then the Immortals could, with complacency, leave their shrines for their far-away home. But it is not true; so people with memories think that the effect of the Seventy-fourth Exhibition is reminiscent. The eternal fitness of juries is a subject for endless animadversion, and they do say that as many good things were rejected as were hung. Well! that was not so many! Likewise the inner history of the award of prizes is something to wonder about; there is an inner history—but the rank and file know it not.

The rugs in the Oriental exhibit show that their makers had a sense of color so keen, so innate, and so harmonious, that people could wish the aroma thereof had mounted to the heads of all painters above stairs when they wielded the brush, instead of intoxicating the choice few.

It is good to see such work as that of Walker, Dessar, Potthast, Tarbell, Vonnob, Murphy, and Minor. The Walker is a big picture and is not a Diaz or Rousseau worked over; and the small Minor in the North Gallery is one of the very best things that ever this Art veteran did.

Childe Hassam makes impressionism comprehensible, reasonable, and consistent. With all his contributions to so many shows, the wonder is how he gave such an important and striking canvas into the hands of the enemy. Yet our friends the enemy have been kind, and hung him well. McCord's large canvas is, however, badly hung and in a poor light. Filled with detail—boats, rocks, villages, cliffs, shore, sea—this ambitious effort wanted quite another light to show it at its best.

Dessar and Beckwith send notable canvases: these two portraits would redeem any room, and when the second Hallgarten went to Dessar, the only wonder was why he had not won the first. Was it not Whistler who sent his second-class thanks to a jury who awarded him a second-class medal? The Stokes picture, by Cecilia Beaux, has been talked over, written over so much that it were only reiteration to speak of its merits.

Geo. Inness is not the echo of his famous father: he has his own individuality and shows his intense feeling in the "Last Shadow of the Cross," an admirable and dignified performance.

The landscapists keep a very high average; they do not strike so high a note as the portrait men, nor do they ever get near that

slough of despond, the story-telling picture, but sustain creditably their reputations. Shurtleff is always agreeable, and his wood-interiors are poetic; Swain Gifford has a very strongly handled "Sand Dune"; Filder too unostentatious canvases that invite us to look again; Miller some meadows low in tone, even "old looking," so quiet has he kept his palette; Bruce Crane a splendid "Clouds," one of the best things he has done; and Howe groups of his cattle, typical American cows, in their own landscapes.

Some one said, "Rehn's big picture was applauded when before the jury." And then some one asked: "Do they look at the names before or after choosing?" A big picture.

A great subject is the "Madonna," and it requires knowledge and power and great simplicity to even attempt it; to succeed is to be a genius. Church has done his best work on this canvas, and has taken an immense stride from gay to grave, from polar bears to the ideal of all maternity.

"A Bit of a Pond"—C. H. Eaton—is as charming a small picture as any in the exhibition. Whittredge's "Hillside" compensates for his other pictures, painted as in days of old; good, it is true, in their way, but with Henry, Bristol, Tait, Richards, Cropsey, and many, many others, he might well rest on his laurels and hang the sword up on the wall.

What particularly was the matter with Boilleau's luminous and idea-full canvas that the corner of the junk-room was filled with it? Or was it just to prove that the West Gallery was now a place for first-class work—no longer a sort of purgatory? And if one thinks the corridor is now to be the "last resort," taking that place away from the West Gallery, he is mistaken; for the corridor has good things in it, some much better than in the South Room—"A Head," by Miss Bunker, "Little Louise," by Vonnob, and the startlingly realistic "Doctor's Visit," by Granville Smith. It should have hung over the North Room door, if it had to be skied, yet from the head of the stairs there is an excellent view of this painting, filled with the loose, driving snow and the splendidly-modelled figures.

There is also in the corridor the miniature colony, and the highest art of all, the art of form that every one "adores" and "thinks so grand"—and which no one looks at, save to regard it as on a par with vases and such like.

The next exhibition will not be held in the old Doge's Palace. This will constitute the chief difference between this and the seventy-fifth show. H.

#### PHILADELPHIA ART CLUB WATER COLOR EXHIBITION.

THE Eighth Annual Exhibition of water colors and pastels opened on the 27th ult., preceded by the usual private view for the press and exhibitors.

An aggregation of nearly 750 pieces constituted the annual *Pot au Feu* from which the committee of five made their selections, with pæans of praise accompanied sometimes by the muffled sounds of discordant disapproval.

More than one-half of these were literally swept out, and 353 were catalogued with a certain qualified approval.

This left us with thirty-eight per cent. of local stuff, and yet this is deemed the best show made within the walls of the Art Club.

The incoming forces of the past two years have been strong enough to arouse the latent drowsiness of the Quaker to put forth an extra effort, and he has succeeded in one or two instances fairly well.

Although, I fail, after an impartial analysis, to see where the exhibition would be if it were not for the excellent support rendered by New York, Boston, Connecticut, and even New Jersey. We need a good mental tonic. What in the name of Hades' keeper will an art patron do with a bird's eye of half a dozen suburban frame dwellings, wishy-washy, wet-papered oysters, carrots, flowers, or a theme like "Dawn," wherein we behold the stiff outline of a creole species of woman rising above some pink clouds, and surrounded by black pigeons, that project themselves upon the organs of sight like the half-tones of a piano keyboard?

The catalogue opens with Henry B. Snell's "Moonlight"—a lonely house on a lonely road, with a three-quarter sky marvelously well attuned to the charms of night—possessing points of merit even more acceptable from the artist's standpoint than his "Twilight at Sea," loaned for the occasion. This hangs in one of the places of honor and serves to awe the localities with the sense of its majestic depth and night's own stillness.

This you all know; therefore we will pass on. Facing your entrance into the middle gallery, hangs "A Quiet Stream," by Harry Eaton.

A good perspective and a fair composition with a well wooded right bank, to which the quiet moving waters cling affectionately.